

“Those who risk their lives in defense of our liberties deserve the best available care when they return home,” said Costa. “This includes our service members with injuries like PTSD that may not be visible. The benefits that these new rules will provide our Valley’s veterans are long overdue, and I commend the VA for taking action to improve health care for our veterans struggling with PTSD.”

Before this change in VA regulations, veterans seeking health and disability benefits for PTSD were faced with the often impossible task of pinpointing the specific traumatic incident or stressor (i.e. an exploding bomb or ambush) that might have triggered their disorders. As a result, less than half of the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans diagnosed with PTSD are receiving benefits from the VA. Under the new rule, veterans simply need to prove they served in a war zone where the conditions were consistent with their symptoms. The new rule will also make it easier for all veterans suffering from PTSD to receive VA health care and disability compensation, and many Vietnam veterans who were denied PTSD benefits in the past may now be eligible.

For more information, see the attached fact sheet. Additional information can also be found at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or by calling the VA’s toll free benefits number at 1-800-827-1000.

### Background

Over two million service members have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. It is estimated that 20 percent of these service members will develop PTSD. PTSD is a medically recognized anxiety disorder that can develop from seeing or experiencing an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to which a person responds with intense fear, helplessness or horror, and is not uncommon among war veterans.